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## SUNDAY SERVICES

### CHEER UP, IT'S CHRISTMAS

Dec. 13 The Joy Of Being Chosen  
Dec. 20 Reasons To Smile This Christmas  
Dec. 24 Joy To The World? (Christmas Eve at 4pm & 7pm)  
Dec. 27 Preparing For Another Unpredictable Year

### THE CHURCH AT ITS BEST

Jan. 3 His House, Your Home: Choosing The Right Church  
Jan. 10 Cheering On The Church  
Jan. 17 Living Beyond Ourselves

### WISDOM AND WEALTH

Jan. 24 How Little Becomes Much  
Jan. 31 How To Avoid Major Money Mistakes  
Feb. 7 How To Use What God Has Given You

## COMMON GROUND MIDWEEK SERVICE

### STRENGTH FOR STRESSFUL TIMES (2 Thessalonians)

Jan. 7 Handling The Tough Times (1:1-4)  
Jan. 21 Relax, God Always Gets The Last Word (1:5-12)  
Feb. 4 What Is The World Coming To? (1Thes.4:13-5:11)  
Feb. 18 Understanding The Events Surrounding The Rapture (2:1-12)  
Mar. 4 Staying Steady In Shaky Times (2:13-17)  
Mar. 18 What To Do Until The Lord Returns (3:1-18)

Apr. 2 He Took Our Place (Good Friday)

### A JET TOUR THROUGH REVELATION

Apr. 8 The Revelation Of Christ And His Church (Rev. 1-3)  
Apr. 29 BAPTISM CELEBRATION  
May 6 NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER (location TBD)  
May 20 The Revelation Of The Seven Year Tribulation, Pt. 1 (Rev. 4-7)  
June 3 The Revelation Of The Seven Year Tribulation, Pt. 2 (Rev. 8-16)  
June 17 The Revelation Of Christ's Second Coming (Rev. 17-19)

# realencouragement

Lakeshore Community Church

[realencouragement.org](http://realencouragement.org)

Volume 15, No. 4

## Cheer Up, It's Christmas!

Who took the "happy" out of the "holidays"?

Ever wonder where it has gone? You attend parties, but not everyone there is jovial. Decorations adorn houses and lawns but inside that home, it may be hard to find deep happiness. Celebrations are held, but is there real inner celebration going on? And gifts are given but what is really being received on December 25?

Christmas is the time to cheer up! God says it is. So why the disconnect with so many people? Could it be that maybe they just haven't focused on the right thing?

This December, we'll be providing some of that focus in the series, "Cheer Up, It's Christmas" (the message titles are listed on the back page of the newsletter). We'll look at why God calls us to cheer up around Christmas as we focus on what really matters. And when we do, He promises that it will bring us unconditional, lasting joy.

So be here (with friends and family) and be ready to receive some "happy" to put into your "holidays".

### Lakeshore Community Center (LC2) Update

We're drawing close to the completion of the LC2. Really close! We are aiming for a Grand Opening in the coming weeks (date TBD). We'll provide an update as part of the December 13 service.

In the mean time, we can use volunteers to help with various projects. And we're very thankful for the generosity of everyone who has pledged and/or given to the "Finishing The Work" campaign. Your faithfulness in giving allows us to fund this building, the furnishings and the mortgage associated with it.

Cheer up, it's Christmas!



Warmly,  
Pastor Vince

### Cheer up, It's Christmas!



### IN THIS ISSUE...

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# Finishing The Work

By Pastor Herb Lawrence

Our Finishing the Work campaign is forty-five weeks into the three year monthly giving (through November 8, 2009). Our pledges totaled \$1,357,103 composed of \$574,028 in up-front gifts and \$783,075 over three years (weekly, monthly, annual and special pledges).

To date we have received \$766,623 consisting of \$580,493 up-front gifts and \$186,130 toward the 3 year total. Percentage-wise, we have received 56% of the total pledged, 101% of pledged up-front gifts, and 24% of the 3 Year total pledge. Using the three-year time (target = 45/156) we are 29% into the campaign. Using the pledged up-front and time target percentage of the three year total we are 59% into the campaign dollar-wise.



The table below illustrates where we stand on Finishing The Work.

	Pledge	Up Front	Over 3 Years
Pledge	\$1,357,103	\$574,028	\$783,075
Actual	\$766,623	\$580,493	\$186,130
Actual TD Percent	56%	101%	24%
Target TD Percentage	59%	100%	29%



# Family Corner

## A Place For Kids and Their Families

### Christmas Grace

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8 (NIV)

Have you ever heard the story of the child who got a lump of smelly old coal for Christmas instead of presents?

If God were fair, we'd all get coal for Christmas. That's because everyone does bad things sometimes.

But God gives us grace instead.

That means God gives us a nice present instead of a stinky lump on Christmas.

Do you like presents?

God loves presents, too!

That's why Jesus came to earth as a baby.

Jesus is the best present ever.

For Family Discussion: How can we show God's love to people this Christmas?



### Christmas Movies

By Amy Mitchell

I admit it, I love holiday movies and specials. At this time of year, there is nothing I like better than to curl up with a cup of cocoa, my favorite snuggly blanket, and a Christmas classic. What are some of your favorites? Do you get teary-eyed at George Bailey's speech or sing along with Bing Crosby? Can you see yourself in Clark Griswold or Charlie Brown in their Christmastime plights? Maybe you feel your own heart grow three sizes when the Grinch learns that Christmas is more than just presents and food.

Full disclosure time: One of my favorite holiday movies is "Ernest Saves Christmas." I know what you must be thinking, but bear with me here. In the movie, the teenage runaway steals Santa's magic bag and replaces it with one filled with feathers. When Santa discovers the switch, he isn't angry. He doesn't send the police after her, or set out to find her bent on revenge. Instead, he extends her grace, and he confidently believes she will come around and return the real bag. Naturally she does, and she is welcomed back not with scolding but with love. She also decides to return home to her family. What a marvelous example of grace and how it can change lives!

For many families, Christmas is a wonderful time to reconnect, share love and joy, and give to others. But for others, grief, loss, and strained family relationships make the holiday season painful. Now is the time to remember that the Lord extended His grace to us, by sending His very own Son to die on the cross for our sins. May we show that same love to those around us. To whom do you need to extend grace this Christmas season?

**Real Encouragement** is published quarterly as a ministry of Lakeshore Community Church.

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**Next Edition**  
Articles for the next edition of Real Encouragement are due by or before May 31. Submitting articles and photos early is appreciated. Submit text and photos by email to [submissions@realencouragement.org](mailto:submissions@realencouragement.org)



# The Birth of Jesus

By MaryAnn Meisenzahl

They felt like bubbles dancing in my stomach. Tiny ripples, like a pebble skipping across a pond; up and down, keeping time with my own steps. The gentle movements lasted only seconds but they would return many times growing bold and strong as the months passed and my body grew. I already loved the baby growing inside me and formed an immediate bond with that tiny life, seemingly within days of conception. Over the years I've talked with other women about this early revelation and every one of them told me they experienced the same thing. I think as God knit our babies in our wombs He unlocked a secret compartment in our hearts and filled it with an immeasurable quantity of love.

Many times I've thought about Mary, the mother of Jesus, and wished I could talk with her about her experience of carrying the King of Heaven and Earth. Did she feel the bubbles and wonder what they were or was her heart unlocked as she gazed in fear at the messenger of God? Was she able to talk with women other than her cousin Elizabeth or her mother? It's certain there was no mid-wife involved, let alone a doctor. Nobody to coach her through labor. No special pillows or music to soothe her. No clock to time the intervals to the next inevitable pain.

The desert gets cold at night. Did Mary and Joseph huddle together for warmth? Did they talk about the miracle of the Son arriving at any hour and have even an inkling of the capacity of His love, not only for them, but the whole world? Did they gaze upon the bright star moving through the night sky, following them, and marvel at God's work? Where would they find shelter? A small room, perhaps? A cave? A barn? God directed them to the most humble of places.

Mary swaddled His precious, tiny body and lay Him in a manger, a feed box for the animals He had created. Did they hear the angels singing and rejoicing from the heavens: Glory to the newborn King? Two ordinary people, chosen to love and nurture Jesus through His life until He would be crucified, resurrected and return to His Father in heaven.

When I think of the people who saw the promised Savior I believe God is showing us a cross section of the population who would place their faith in Jesus, even to the last day. Poor hardworking shepherds, foreign kings bearing costly gifts, and parents ready to give their life and their entrusted child to the will of God. The faithful from across the world.

Thank you Father for the life and love of your Son Jesus. Thank you Father for your loving servants Mary and Joseph. During this season of lights, as we celebrate Christmas, may His brilliant light shine through us. Let us love one another and let us humble ourselves before our Lord. Let us still ourselves and listen to God's call to do the extraordinary. I wish you peace and increasing faith in our King, Jesus.



# The Friendship Company

## We're Sailing with God!



By Jill Freese

On Saturday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, the Children's Ministry hosted a Fall Festival. Little Red Riding Hood, Spiderman and others enjoyed crafts, games, a story and goodies. What fun!



Our Kindergarten through Fifth Graders are enjoying **Celebration Station** on Sunday mornings. Celebration Station gives kids: **Hope** for all the amazing things God has in store for them. **Truths** that help them overcome life's challenges by learning to lean on Jesus.

**Joy** as they embark on a wonderful journey of songs, games, videos, impactful experiences and great conversation and **Friendships** with other children.

Our next big event is the Christmas Family Festival on Thursday, December 17<sup>th</sup> from 7 to 8:30pm. This event is for ALL LAKESHORE FOLKS! Come and enjoy Christmas cookies and punch, Christmas crafts, movies, and caroling with our Youth Band. It will be a wonderful evening to spend time with your church families.

Check out the **Real Encouragement** website  
[realencouragement.org](http://realencouragement.org)

We welcome your submissions.  
Please e-mail us at  
[realencouragement@gmail.com](mailto:realencouragement@gmail.com).  
Lakeshore team leaders, we want to hear from you! Let us know what your teams are doing.  
Send us an e-mail at  
[realencouragement@gmail.com](mailto:realencouragement@gmail.com)

Every Sunday and Common Ground Thursday, a group of volunteers works hard to provide a terrific program that your kids will enjoy and want to return to. Both the Friend Ship Company and the Kids' CAFÉ need more volunteers. We invite you to join us in doing God's

## Lakeshore's Student Ministry

### New Is Nice

There's no doubt about it, we all like things new! Whether it's a new car with that distinctly new smell, a new phone with its sleek, shiny design, or a new toupée to cover up the recently discovered bald spot, there's just something about things that are new. New is nice! Within Lakeshore's Student Ministry, we are on the verge of experiencing *lots* of new....and it's exciting! Here's what's new:

#### New Space

In just a few short weeks, we'll be moving into our brand new youth rooms as part of the Lakeshore Community Center, designed entirely with students in mind. With nearly 1,700 square feet of space, the students will have a place of their own to shoot some pool, grab a smoothie, sit on a couch with some friends, or play the Wii.

#### New Services

When the new space opens up, we'll be offering two new services tailored to 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. These will be happening at 9:00 & 11:00 in the multipurpose room while the adult services are taking place in the main auditorium.

#### New Schedule

On non-Common Ground Thursday nights, our new space will be opened up to the 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders in the community to simply hang out, shoot some hoops, and build healthy relationships in an atmosphere of fun! Procrastinated and didn't get homework done in time? Bring it with you and get it done in a more comfortable atmosphere!

#### New Stories

More exciting than anything else is the newness presented in II Corinthians 5:17 – “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” It's so exciting to know that in this season of newness, it's not just limited to a space, a service, or a schedule, but it's rooted in the life-stories that will forever be changed as a result.

It's a great time to be involved in Lakeshore's Student Ministry. If you're a student who has yet to plug in, why not come to one of our *new* Sunday services? If you're an adult who loves God and likes students, why not check us out to see if God could use you in *new* ways? After all, new is nice!

Pastor Cory



## Just Walk Across the Room

By Mike Knox

Lakeshore recently had a series that was combined to use small groups and Sunday Service together. *Just Walk Across the Room*, by Bill Hybels, was all about how to share your faith with others. Hybels is the Senior Pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington IL. Through the book and DVD series, he explains how to make difference in someone's life by building relationships.



Our beliefs about God and how we deal with others is who we are. They run deep and affect everything we do, how we see and interpret our world. So when people talk about their belief in God they have to open up a piece of themselves and expose their innermost feelings.

We all have run into someone who wants to “win your soul for God”. They talk at you, give you information, tell you what you're doing wrong. That didn't work when it happened to me. I immediately tuned them out, looked for ways to escape, or just plain told them to go away.

Why doesn't that work? Because faith is about a relationship with God. Jesus taught us how to relate with others and the Holy Sprit guides us in our relationships. When you truly care about others the opportunity to talk about God will naturally come. It may take years before someone you care about realizes what was missing in his or her life. But God has His own timetable and He uses you to help.

So how can you help? Don't become a “Christian Cocoon”. Make sure your old friends *stay* your friends. Have a dinner party and invite seekers and Christian friends together. Be a friend to the end. When the time is right the opportunity to talk about God will come and the other person will be much more likely to really talk about God with you.

If you would like to learn more about *Just Walk Across the Room*, contact Lakeshore Community Church. We have the DVD as well as the complete message series on CD related to this topic.

